

February 9th, 2011

National Security Working Group

Weekly National Security Working Group Update

Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman
Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ), NSWG Chairman

The National Security Working Group (NSWG) is comprised of Trent Franks, 2nd, AZ; Connie Mack, 14th, FL; Duncan Hunter, 52nd, CA and Allen West, 22nd, FL. We look forward to providing RSC members updates on national security issues and matters using this forum. We welcome your inputs.

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SHIELD Act

Today, Mr. Franks will introduce the Secure High-voltage Infrastructure for Electricity from Lethal Damage Act (SHIELD Act). The necessity to secure our electrical infrastructure is urgent. The SHIELD Act requires promulgating a rule or issue an order requiring implementation, by any owner, operator, or user of the bulk-power system in the United States, of measures to protect the bulk-power system against Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) vulnerability. It is clear that we will have an EMP event in the future. The cost of damage from the most extreme solar event has been estimated at \$1 to \$2 trillion with a recovery time of four to ten years.¹ We must come together in supporting the passage of this legislation through both chambers and the White House.

Israel and Egypt Peace Alliance - A Continued Security Partnership

The United States has long considered Egypt a Democratic ally in the Middle East. Egypt has also increasingly become an important strategic ally for Israel, ever since the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979. In light of the unique relationship Israel and the United States share, not to mention Israel's inestimable importance as a beacon of freedom and Democracy in the Middle East, perhaps the most serious potential threat in this process is posed by the violently anti-Western, anti-Israeli Muslim Brotherhood, a group that appears interested in capitalizing on the current Egyptian instability to further the global Islamic conquest and so-called Islamic caliphate the group calls for in its literature. As the protests in Egypt continue, it is important that the Egyptian government work toward A.) minimizing violence against protestors, journalists, etc... and B.) ensuring that the upcoming elections are free and fair. Throughout this transition, it is especially vital that the primary focus be on upholding fundamental Democratic principles, including freedom of religion.

Electromagnetic Pulse Caucus Launch - 15 February 2011

On 15 February at 2:00pm in HVC 200, the EMP Caucus will hold its initial meeting. The EMP threat is recognized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commissions (FERC) and North American Electric Reliability Association (NERC). Yesterday, FERC held a Technical Conference on Priorities for Addressing Risks to the Reliability of the Bulk-Power System by bringing together leaders from various organizations in holding discussions on the EMP threat. Regulators and industry are moving forward by conducting research and discussions on the best way to secure our electrical infrastructure. The time for Congress to come together and provide the legal framework for protecting our electric infrastructure is now. We cannot delay this urgent issue any longer.

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Necessity of Maintaining the Nation's Amphibious Capability

Real World Examples of Amphibious Operations: In the last twenty years, the Marine Corps has participated in over one hundred Amphibious Operations, fifty of those occurring since 9/11. Even so, analysts and bureaucrats, to include the Secretary of Defense, question the necessity to maintain an amphibious capability in the Armed Forces. The error in this argument is that it wrongly constricts the definition of Amphibious Operations as solely full scale beach assaults reminiscent of Inchon, Iwo Jima, and Tarawa. This stubbornly ignores the low-end of the spectrum from small scale forcible entry to disaster relief to noncombatant evacuations. In November 2001, the Navy and Marine Corps projected power ashore from Amphibious Shipping in the form of Task Force 58, composed of the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU), four hundred miles deep into Afghanistan. In September 2005 the Amphibious Ship Iwo Jima sailed into the Mississippi River and docked at piers in downtown New Orleans to assist with the rescue of American citizens largely aided with the current legacy Amphibious Assault Vehicle while the Amphibious Ship Bataan conducted the same operation off the coast of Mississippi. In 2006, the 24th MEU assisted in the evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon during the Hezbollah-Israeli Conflict, utilizing their organic air assets to ferry personnel out of the country. In 2009, the 15th MEU and Navy Amphibious Ready Group dispatched the amphibious ship Dubuque to the Gulf of Aden, where its raid force recaptured the hijacked ship Magellan Star from Somali Pirates.

These are just four examples of fifty operations in the past ten years where "theater entry" from bordering countries or insertion via strategic air was not feasible or timely. Three-fourths of the world's capital and eighty percent of its population lives in littoral regions. This brings us to the question of potential evacuations from Egypt. If commercial air shut down and tensions increased to the point of hostilities, Libya, Sudan and Israel would not be feasible or timely options for the establishment of a forward base necessary to conduct noncombatant evacuations. Egypt has over one thousand miles of coast already familiar to amphibious assaults by the Marine Corps due to the biennial exercise know as Operation Bright Star. If we continue to degrade the Marine Corps amphibious capability through elimination of procurement programs such as the MV-22 Osprey and Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, we will be severely degrading our ability as a nation to aid our allies in evacuations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and forcible entry. The uniqueness of the Marine Corps's core capability is that it can maneuver decisively from the sea when all other options are limited.

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